SAMSON.

AN

ORATORIO.

As it is Perform'd at the

THEATRE-ROYAL *in* Covent-Garden.

Alter'd and adapted to the Stage from the SAMSON AGONISTES of *John Milton*.

Set to Muſick by GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL.

LONDON:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON in the *Strand*.

MDCCXLIII.

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To His Royal Highness

FREDERICK

PRINCE of *WALES.*

The following

ORATORIO

Is with all Humility Dedicated

By His Royal Highness's

most devoted,

most dutiful, and

most obedient

humble Servant,

Dramatis Perſonæ.

ISRAELITES.

SAMSON.

MANOA, *Father to* Samſon.

MICAH, *Friend to* Samſon.

An Iſraelite *Officer.*

Chorus of Iſraelites.

PHILISTINES.

DALILA, *Wife of* Samſon.

HARAPHA, *a Giant.*

Chorus of Philiſtine *Women, and Prieſts of* Dagon.

SCENE, *Before the Priſon in* Gaza.

SAMSON.

AN

ORATORIO:

ACT I. SCENE I.

SAMSON *blind, and in Chains. Chorus of the Prieſts of* Dagon *celebrating his Feſtival.*

SAMSON.

THIS Day, a ſolemn Feaſt to *Dagon* held
Relieves me from my Task of ſervile Toil;
Unwillingly their Superſtition yields
This Reſt! To breathe Heav'n's Air freſh blowing, pure and ſweet.

Chorus of the Prieſts of *Dagon.*

Awake the Trumpet's lofty Sound;
The joyful ſacred Feſtival comes round,
When Dagon, *King of all the Earth, is crown'd.*

AIR.

Ye Men of Gaza, *hither bring,*
The merry Pipe and pleaſing String,
The ſolemn Hymn and chearful Song;
Be Dagon *prais'd by ev'ry Tongue,*

[Chorus repeated.]

AIR.

Loud as the Thunder's awful Voice,
In Notes of Triumph, Notes of Praiſe,
So high great Dagon's *Name we'll raiſe,*
That Heav'n and Earth may hear how we rejoice.

AIR.

Then free from Sorrow, free from Thrall,
All blith and gay,
With Sports and Play
We'll celebrate his Feſtival.

[Chorus repeated.]

Samſon. Why by an Angel was my Birth foretold,
As in a fiery Column aſcending
From off the Altar, in my Parents' Sight?
Why was my Nurture order'd and preſcrib'd
As of a Perſon ſeparate to God?
If I muſt die, betray'd and captiv'd thus,
The Scorn and Gaze of Foes!——O cruel Thought!
My Griefs find no Redreſs; they inward prey,
Like gangreen'd Wounds, immedicable grown.

AIR.

Samſon. *Torments, alas! are not confin'd*
To Heart, or Head, or Breaſt;
But will a ſecret Paſſage find
Into the very inmoſt Mind,
With Pains intenſe oppreſt,
That rob the Soul itſelf of Reſt.

SCENE II.

SAMSON, MICAH, *and Chorus of* Israelites.

Micah. [*Apart.*] O change beyond Report, Thought, or Belief!
See how he lies with languish'd Head, unpropp'd:
Abandon'd: past all Hope! Can this be he?
Heroick *Samson?* whom no Strength of Man,
Nor Fury of the fiercest Beast could quell?
Who tore the Lion, as the Lion tears the Kid;
Ran weaponless on Armies clad in Iron,
Useless the temper'd Steel, or Coat of Mail.

AIR.

Micah. *O Mirrour of! our fickle State!*
In Birth, in Strength, in Deeds how great!
From highest Glory fall'n so low,
Sunk in the deep Abyss of Woe.

Samson. [*Apart.*] Whom have I to complain of but myself,
Who Heav'n's great Trust cou'd not in Silence keep;
But weakly to a Woman must reveal it?
O glorious Strength! O Impotence of Mind!
But without Wisdom what does Strength avail?
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall.
God (when he gave it) hung it in my Hair,
To shew how slight the Gift. — But, Peace, my Soul,
Strength was my Bane, the Source of all my Woes,
Each told apart wou'd ask a Life to wail.

Micah. [To *Samson.*] Matchless in Might! once *Isr'el's* Glory, now her Grief;
We come, thy Friends well known, to visit thee.
If Words have Charms to swage thy troubled Mind,
We'll pour their Balm into its fester'd Wounds.

Samson. Welcome, my Friends, Experience teaches now
How counterfeit the Coin of Friendship is,
That's only in the Superscription shewn.
In the warm Sun-shine of our prosp'rous Days
Friends swarm; but in the Winter of Adversity
Draw in their Heads; tho' sought, not to be found.

Micah. Which shall we first bewail, thy Bondage, or lost Sight?

" Prison within Prison! Inseparably dark!
" Thou art become the Dungeon of thyself!
" For ever now shut up with gloomy Night,
" Since inward Light puts forth no visual Beam.

Samson. O Loss of Sight! of thee I most complain;
O worse than Beggary, Old Age, or Chains!
My very Soul in real Darkness dwells!
" Light, the prime Work of God, to me's extinct,
" And all her Objects of Delight annull'd,
" Which might have sooth'd my Griefs; the vilest Worm
" Excels me now; it creeps, but then it sees.
" Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half:
" Myself my Sepulchre, a moving Grave.
" Alive, yet bury'd, amidst all Ills of Life,
" Life in Captivity with inhuman Foes.

AIR.

Samson. *Total Eclipse! no Sun, no Moon!*
All dark amidst the Blaze of Noon!
O glorious Light! No chearing Ray
To glad my Eyes with welcome Day:
Why thus depriv'd thy prime Decree,
Sun, Moon, and Stars are dark to me.

Micah. Since Light so necessary is to Life,
That in the Soul 'tis almost Life itself.

Why to the tender Eye is Sight confin'd?
So obvious, and ſo eaſy to be quench'd;
Why not, as Feeling, thro' all Parts diffus'd,
That we might look at will thro' ev'ry Pore?

CHORUS.

O firſt created Beam! and thou great Word!
Let there be Light! and Light was over all,
One heav'nly Blaze ſhone round this earthly Ball.
To thy dark Servant Life by Light afford.

Samſon. You ſee, my Friends, how Woes incloſe me round;
But, had I Sight, how cou'd I heave my Head
For Shame? Thus for a Word, or Tear, divulge
To a falſe Woman God's moſt ſecret Gift,
And then be ſung, or proverb'd for a Fool.

Micah. The wiſeſt Men have err'd, and been deceiv'd
By Female Arts. Deject not then thyſelf,
Who haſt of Griefs a Load. Yet Men will ask,
Why did not *Samſon* rather wed at home?
In his own Tribe are fairer, or as fair.

Samſon. O that I had! Alas, fond Wiſh! too late.
That ſpecious Monſter! *Dalila!* my Snare!
Myſelf the Cauſe, who vanquiſh'd by her Tears,
Gave up my Fort of Silence to a Woman.

Micah. Here comes thy reverend Sire, old *Manoa,*
With careful Steps, and Locks as white as Down.

Samſon, Alas! another Grief that Name awakes.

SCENE III.

SAMSON, MICAH, MANOA, *and the Chorus of* Iſraelites.

Manoa. Brethren, and Men of *Dan,* ſay, where's my Son?

Samſon, fond *Iſr'el*'s Boaſt? inform my Age.
Micah. As ſignal now in low dejected State,
As in the height of Pow'r: See where he lies.
Manoa. O miſerable Change! is this the Man
Renown'd afar, the Dread of *Iſr'el*'s Foes?
Who with an Angel's Strength their Armies duell'd,
Himſelf an Army; now unequal Match
To guard his Breaſt againſt the Coward's Spear.
Micah. O ever-failing Truſt in mortal Strength!
And O what not deceivable and vain in Man!

AIR.

Mic. *God of our Fathers, what is Man,*
So proud, ſo vain, ſo great in Story?
His Fame, a Blaſt; his Life, a Span;
A Bubble at the height of Glory:
Oft' he that's moſt exalted high,
Unſeemly falls in Human Eye.

Manoa. The Good we wiſh for, often proves our Bane;
I pray'd for Children, and I gain'd a Son,
And ſuch a Son, as all Men hail'd me happy;
But who'd be now a Father in my Stead?
The Bleſſing drew a Scorpion's Tail behind.
This Plant (ſelect and ſacred for a while,
The Miracle of all!) was in one Hour
Enſnar'd, aſſaulted, overcome, led bound,
His Foes Deriſion, Captive, poor and blind.

AIR.

Manoa. *Thy glorious Deeds inſpir'd my Tongue,*
Whilſt Airs of Joy from thence did flow;
To Sorrow now I tune my Song,
And ſet my Harp to Notes of Woe.

" *The warlike Cornet ſpoke aloud*
" *Your Triumphs to the ſhouting Crowd;*
" *Now ſolemn Muſick plays its Part,*
" *And ſhews the Anguiſh of my Heart.*

Samſon. Juſtly theſe Evils have befall'n thy Son;
Sole Author I, ſole Cauſe, who have profan'd
The Myſteries of God; by me betray'd
To faithleſs Parlies, feminine Aſſaults:
To the falſe Fair I yielded all my Heart,
So far Effeminacy held me yok'd
Her Slave. O foul Indignity! O Blot
To Honour and to Arms!

Manoa. Worſe yet remains;
This Day they celebrate with Pomps and Sports,
And ſacrifice to *Dagon*, Idol God!
Who gave thee Bound and Blind into their Hands;
Thus is he magnify'd; the Living God
Blaſphem'd, and ſcorn'd by that idolatrous Rout.

Samſon. This have I done, this Pomp, this Honour brought
To Idol *Dagon*; but to *Iſr'el* Shame;
And our true God Diſgrace. My Griefs for this,
Forbid mine Eye to cloſe, or Thoughts to reſt:
But now the Strife ſhall end; me overthrown,
Dagon preſumes to enter Liſts with God;
Who, thus provok'd, will not connive, but rouze
His Fury ſoon, and his great Name aſſert.
Dagon ſhall ſtoop, ere long be quite deſpoil'd
Of all thoſe boaſted Trophies won on me.

AIR.

Samſon. *Why does the God of* Iſr'el *ſleep?*
Ariſe with dreadful Sound,
And Clouds encompaſs'd round,
Thou ſcatter the Heathen hence thy Thunder bear

The Tempeſt of thy Wrath now raiſe,
In Whirlwind them purſue,
Full fraught with Vengeance due,
'Till Shame and Trouble all thy Foes ſhall ſeize.

Micah. There lies our Hope; true Prophet may'ſt thou be,
That God may vindicate his glorious Name;
Nor let us doubt whether God is Lord, or *Dagon.*

CHORUS.

Then ſhall they know, that He whoſe Name
Jehovah *is alone,*
O'er all the Earth but one,
Was ever the moſt High, and ſtill the ſame.

Manoa. For thee, my deareſt Son, muſt thou mean while
Lie thus neglected, in this loathſome Plight?
Samſon. It ſhou'd be ſo, to expiate my Crime,
If poſſible: Shameful Garrulity!
Had I reveal'd the Secret of a Friend,
Moſt heinous that: But impiouſly to blab
God's Counſel --- is a Sin without a Name.
Manoa. Be for thy Fault contrite: But, O my Son,
To high Diſpoſal leave the Forfeit due;
God may relent, and quit thee all his Debt;
Reject not then the offer'd Means of Life;
Already have I treated with ſome Lords
To ranſom thee: Revenge is ſated now,
To ſee thee thus, who cannot harm them more.
Samſon. Why ſhou'd I live? " In youthful Courage once,
" And Deeds of Strength, all Mortals I excell'd;
" Dreaded I walk'd o'er hoſtile Ground, fearleſs myſelf,
" 'Till, ſwoln with Pride, I fell into the Pit
" Of fair, fallacious Looks; now ſham'd and quell'd,
" In what can I be uſeful to my Friends?

" But loiter idly on the houſhold Hearth,
" A burd'nous Drone, to Viſitants a Gaze,
" 'Till Length of Years, and ſedentary Numbneſs,
" Shall craze my Limbs; vain Monuments of Strength!

Manoa. " Better at home lie bed-rid, unemploy'd,
" Than with thy Strength ſerve them thou ſhou'dſt annoy;
" God may enlighten yet thy darken'd Eyes,
" Wherewith to ſerve him better than thou haſt.

Samſon. Soon ſhall theſe Orbs to double Darkneſs yield,
My genial Spirits droop, my Hopes are flat;
Nature in me ſeems weary of herſelf;
My Race of Glory run, and Race of Shame;
Death invocated oft' ſhall end my Pains,
And lay me gently down with them that reſt.

Micah. Then long Eternity ſhall greet your Bliſs;
No more of earthly Joys, ſo falſe and vain!

AIR.

Joys that are pure, ſincerely good,
Shall then o'ertake you as a Flood:
Where Truth and Peace do ever ſhine,
With Love that's perfectly divine.

CHORUS.

Then round about the ſtarry Throne
Of Him who ever rules alone,
Your heav'nly-guided Soul ſhall climb;
Of all this earthy Groſſneſs quit,
With Glory crown'd, for ever ſit,
And triumph over Death, and Thee, O Time.

ACT II. SCENE I.

SAMSON, MICAH, MANOA, *and the Chorus of* Iſraelites.

MANOA.

DESPAIR not thus; you once were God's Delight;
His deſtin'd from the Womb; by him led on
To Deeds above the Nerve of mortal Arm;
Under his Eye abſtemious you grew up;
Nor did the dancing Ruby, ſparkling, out-pour'd,
Allure you from the cool cryſtalline Stream.

Samſon. Where'er the liquid Brook or Fountain flow'd
I drank, nor envy'd Man the chearing Grape;
But what avail'd this Temp'rance not compleat,
Againſt another Object more enticing?
I laid my Strength in Luſt's laſcivious Lap.

Manoa. Truſt yet in God; the Father's timely Care
Shall proſecute the means to free thee hence;
Mean time, all healing Words from theſe thy Friends admit.

AIR.

Manoa. *Juſt are the Ways of God to Man,*
Let none his ſecret Actions ſcan;
For all is beſt, tho' oft we doubt
Of what his Wiſdom brings about:
Still his unſearchable Diſpoſe
Bleſſes the Righteous in the cloſe.

Samſon. My Evils hopeleſs are; one Pray'r remains,
A ſpeedy Death, to cloſe my Miſeries.

Micah. Relieve thy Champion, Image of thy Strength;
And turn his Labours to a peaceful End.

AIR.

Micah. *Return, O God of Hosts! behold*
Thy Servant in Distress,
His mighty Griefs redress,
Nor by the Heathen be they told.

CHORUS.

To Dust his Glory they wou'd tread,
And number him among'st the Dead.

SCENE II.

SAMSON, MICAH, DALILA, *Chorus of* Israelites, *and Virgins attending* DALILA.

Micah. But who is this, that so bedeck'd and gay,
Comes this way sailing like a stately Ship,
With all her Streamers waving in the Winds;
An odorous Perfume her Harbinger.
A Damsel Train behind? 'Tis *Dalila*, thy Wife.

Samson. My Wife! my Trait'ress: Let her not come near me,

Micah. She stands, and eyes thee fix'd, with Head declin'd,
(Like a fair Flow'r surcharg'd with Dew) she weeps;
Her Words address'd to thee seem Tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the Borders of her silken Vail.

Dalila. With doubtful Feet, and wav'ring Resolution,
I come, O *Samson*! dreading thy Displeasure;
But Conjugal Affection led me on,
Prevailing over Fear and tim'rous Doubt;
Glad, if in ought, my Help or Love cou'd serve
To expiate my rash, unthought Misdeed.

Samſon. Out, thou *Hyæna!* 'twas Malice brought thee here;
Theſe are the Arts of Women falſe, like thee,
To break all Vows, repent, deceive, ſubmit;
Then, with inſtructed Skill, again tranſgreſs:
The wiſeſt Men have met ſuch boſom Snakes,
Beguil'd like me, to Ages an Example.

Dalila. I wou'd not leſſen my Offence, yet beg
To weigh it by itſelf; what is it then?
But Curioſity, a ſmall Female Fault,
Greedy of Secrets, but to publiſh them.
Why wou'd you truſt a Woman's Frailty then?
And to her Importunity your Strength?
A mutual Weakneſs mutual Pardon claims.

Samſon. How cunningly the Sorcereſs diſplays
Her own Tranſgreſſions, to upbraid me mine?
I to myſelf was falſe, ere thou to me;
Bitter Reproach! but true. The Pardon then
I to my Folly give, take thou to thine.

AIR.

With plaintive Notes and am'rous Moan
Thus coos the Turtle left alone;
Like her, averſe to each Delight,
She wears the tedious widow'd Night:
But when her abſent Mate returns,
With doubled Raptures then ſhe burns.

Dalila. Alas! th' Event was worſe than I foreſaw:
Fearleſs at home of Partners in my Love,
'Twas Jealouſy did prompt to keep you there
Both Day and Night, Love's Pris'ner, wholly mine.

Samſon. Did Love conſtrain thee? No, 'twas raging Luſt.
Love ſeeks for Love, thy Treaſon ſought my Hate.
In vain you ſtrive to cover Shame with Shame:

Once join'd to me, tho' judg'd your Country's Foe,
Parents, and all, were in the Husband loſt.

AIR.

Your Charms to Ruin led the way,
My Senſe deprav'd,
My Strength enſlav'd,
As I did love, you did betray.
How great the Curſe! How hard my Fate
To paſs Life's Sea with ſuch a Mate!

Dalila. Forgive what's done, nor think of what's paſt Cure;
From forth this Priſon-Houſe come home to me,
Where with redoubled Love, and nurſing Care,
(To me glad Office!) my Virgins and myſelf
Shall tend about thee to extremeſt Age.

AIR.

Dalila. *My Faith and Truth, O* Samſon, *prove;*
But hear me, hear the Voice of Love;
With Love no Mortal can be cloy'd,
All Happineſs is Love enjoy'd.

Chorus of Virgins.

Her Faith and Truth, O Samſon, *prove,*
But hear her, hear the Voice of Love.

AIR.

Dalila. *To fleeting Pleaſures make your Court,*
No Moment loſe, for Life is ſhort;
The preſent Now's our only Time,

How charming is domeſtick Eaſe!
A thouſand ways I'll ſtrive to pleaſe:
Life is not loſt, tho' loſt your Sight,
Let other Senſes taſte Delight.

Chorus repeated.

Her Faith and Truth, O Samſon, *prove,*
But hear her, hear the Voice of Love.

Samſon. Ne'er think of that; I know thy warbling Charms,
Thy Trains, thy Wiles, and fair enchanted Cup;
Their Force is null'd; where once I have been caught,
I ſhun the Snare; theſe Chains, this Priſon-Houſe
I count the Houſe of Liberty to thine.

Dalila. Let me approach at leaſt, and touch thy Hand.

Samſon. Not for thy Life, leſt fierce Rememb'rance wake
My ſudden Rage, to tear thee Limb from Limb:
At Diſtance I forgive; depart with that:
Now triumph in thy Falſhood; ſo farewel.

Dalila. Thou art more deaf to Pray'rs than Winds or Seas,
Thy Anger rages an eternal Tempeſt;
Why ſhould I humbly ſue for Peace, thus ſcorn'd,
With Infamy upon my Name denounc'd?
When in this Land I ever ſhall be held
The firſt of Women-kind, Living or Dead.
My Praiſes ſhall be ſung at ſolemn Feaſts,
Who ſav'd my Country from a fierce Deſtroyer.

DUET.

Dalila. *Traitor to Love, I'll ſue no more*
For Pardon ſcorn'd, your Threats give o'er.
Samſon. *Traitreſs to Love, I'll hear no more*
The Charmer's Voice, your Arts give o'er.

SCENE III.

SAMSON, MICAH, *and the Chorus of* Iſraelites.

Micah. She's gone, a Serpent manifeſt, her Sting
Diſcover'd in the end.

Samſon. So let her go;
God ſent her here to aggravate my Folly.

AIR.

It is not Virtue, Valour, Wit,
Or Comelineſs of Grace,
That Woman's Love can truly hit,
Or in her Heart claim Place.

Still wav'ring where their Choice to fix,
Too oft' they chooſe the Wrong;
So much Self-love does rule the Sex,
They nothing elſe love long.

Samſon. Favour'd of Heav'n is he who finds one true;
How rarely found!---his way to Peace is ſmooth.

CHORUS.

To Man God's univerſal Law
Gave Pow'r to keep the Wife in Awe;
Thus ſhall his Life be ne'er diſmay'd,
By Female Uſurpation ſway'd.

SCENE IV.

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA, *Chorus of* Iſraelites, *and Prieſts of* Dagon.

Micah. No Words of Peace, no Voice-enchanting Fear,
A rougher Tongue expect.---Here's *Harapha,*

I know him by his Stride, and haughty Look.

Harapha. I come not, *Samſon*, to condole thy Chance;
I am of *Gath*, Men call me *Harapha*;
Thou know'ſt me now; of thy prodigious Might
Much have I heard, incredible to me!
Nor leſs diſpleas'd, that never in the Field
We met, to try each other's Deeds of Strength:
I'd ſee if thy Appearance anſwers loud Report.

Samſon. The Way to know, were not to ſee, but taſte.

Harapha. Ha! doſt thou then already ſingle me?
I thought that Labour, and thy Chains, had tam'd thee.
Had Fortune brought me to that Field of Death,
Where thou wrought'ſt Wonders with an Aſs's Jaw,
I'd left thy Carcaſe where the Aſs lay thrown.

Samſon. Boaſt not of what thou would'ſt have done, but do.

Harapha. The Honour certain to have won from thee
I loſe, prevented by thy Eyes put out;
To combat with a blind Man, I diſdain.

AIR.

Honour and Arms ſcorn ſuch a Foe,
Tho' I cou'd end thee at a Blow;
Poor Victory,
To conquer thee,
Or glory in thy Overthrow:
Vanquiſh a Slave that is half ſlain!
So mean a Triumph I diſdain.

Samſon. "Who cou'd withſtand me, ſingle and unarm'd,
" 'Till a vile Woman, breaking Marriage Vows,
" Did circumvent me?---But now put on your Arms,
" Then take for Spear your weighty Weaver's Beam,
" And come within my Reach, this oaken Staff

" Shall

" Shall raiſe ſuch Outcries on thy clatter'd Iron,
" Thou oft' ſhall wiſh thyſelf at *Gath* again,
Harapha. " Thou durſt not thus diſparage glorious Arms,
" The Hero's Ornament, had not ſome Spells
" Of curs'd Magician charm'd thee into Strength,
" Thou feign'ſt at Birth was giv'n thee in thy Hair.
Samſon. " To thy *Philiſtine* Race I leave th' Enchanters
" Arts;
" To *Iſr'el*'s Sons forbid. At my Nativity
" Thro' all my Limbs was heav'nly Strength diffus'd,
" Whilſt (as I vow'd) theſe Locks unſhorn I kept.

AIR.

Samſon. *My Strength is from the living God,*
By Heav'n free-gifted at my Birth,
To quell the Mighty of the Earth,
And prove the brutal Tyrant's Rod:
But to the Righteous Peace and Reſt,
With Liberty to all oppreſt.

Harapha. " Thy God regards thee not, has given thee up
" A Prey to us, to grind among our Slaves.
Samſon. " This I deſerve, and more; yet Pardon hope
" From him whoſe Ear and Eye are ever open
" To the Suppliant's Cry; in Confidence whereof
" I here defy thee to the deadly Proof.
Harapha. With thee? a Man condemn'd! a Slave enroll'd!
No worthy Match to ſtain the Warrior's Sword.
Samſon. Cam'ſt thou for this, vain Boaſter? yet take heed;
My Heels are fetter'd, but my Hands are free.
Thou Bulk, of Spirit void, I once again,
Blind, and in Chains, provoke thee to the Fight.

Harapha.

Harapha. O *Dagon!* can I hear this Inſolence,
To me unus'd, not rend'ring inſtant Death?

DUET. Samſon *and* Harapha.

Samſon. *Go, baffled Coward, go,*
Leſt Vengeance lay thee low;
In Safety fly my Wrath with Speed.
Harapha. *Preſume not on thy God,*
Who under Foot has trod
Thy Strength and Thee, at greateſt need.
Both. *Go, baffled Coward, go,* &c.
Preſume not on thy God, &c.

Micah. Here lie the Proof: --- If *Dagon* be thy God,
With high Devotion invocate his Aid,
His Glory is concern'd. Let him diſſolve
Thoſe magick Spells that gave our Hero Strength,
Then know whoſe God is God; *Dagon*, of mortal Make,
Or that Great One whom *Abra'm*'s Sons adore.

Chorus of *Iſraelites.*

Hear, Jacob's *God!* Jehovah, *hear!*
O ſave us, proſtrate at thy Throne,
Iſr'el *depends on thee alone;*
Save us, and ſhew that thou art near.

Harapha. Dagon, ariſe! attend thy ſacred Feaſt;
Thy Honour calls, this Day admits no Reſt.

Chorus of the Prieſts of *Dagon.*

To Song and Dance we give the Day,
Which ſhews thy univerſal Sway.

Priests

Protect us by thy mighty Hand,
And sweep this Race from out the Land.

Chorus of both.

Both Chorus's. *Fix'd in his everlasting Seat.*
Chorus of *Israelites.* Jehovah *rules the World in State.*
Chorus Priests of *Dagon.* *Great* Dagon *rules the World in State.*
Both. *His Thunder roars, Heav'n shakes, and Earth's aghast,*
The Stars with deep Amaze,
Remain in stedfast Gaze.
Chorus of *Israelites.* Jehovah *is of Gods the first and last.*
Chorus Priests of *Dagon.* *Great* Dagon *is of Gods the first and last.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA, *and Chorus of* Iſraelites.

MICAH.

MORE Trouble is behind, for *Harapha*
Comes on amain, Speed in his Steps and Look.
Samſon. I fear him not, nor all his Giant Brood.
Harapha. Samſon, to thee our Lords thus bid me ſay:
This Day to *Dagon* we do ſacrifice
With Triumph, Pomp, and Games; we know thy Strength
Surpaſſes Human Race; come then, and ſhew
Some publick Proof to grace this ſolemn Feaſt.
Samſon. I am an *Hebrew,* and our Law forbids
My Preſence at their vain religious Rites.
Harapha. "This Anſwer will not pleaſe; riſe then, with Speed.
Samſon. "Have they not Artiſts, Wreſtlers, Dancers,
"Anticks,
"That I'm pick'd out, a Slave o'er-labour'd thus,
"To make them Sport with blind Activity.
Harapha. This Anſwer will offend; regard thyſelf.
Samſon Myſelf! my Conſcience and internal Peace!
Am I ſo broke with Servitude, to yield
To ſuch abſurd Commands? To be their Fool,
And play before their God?------I will not come.
Harapha. My Meſſage, giv'n with Speed, brooks no Delay.

AIR *for* Harapha.

Preſuming Slave! to move their Wrath;
For Mercy ſue,
Or Vengeance due

Conſider, ere it be too late,
To ward th' unerring Shaft of Fate.

Micah. Reflect then, *Samſon,* Matters now are ſtrain'd
Up to the Height, whether to hold or break.
He's gone, whoſe Malice may inflame the Lords.
Samſon. Shall I abuſe this conſecrated Gift
Of Strength, again returning with my Hair,
By vaunting it in honour to their God,
And proſtituting holy things to Idols?
Micah. How thou wilt here come off ſurmounts my Reach;
'Tis Heav'n alone can ſave both us and thee.

Chorus of *Iſraelites.*

With Thunder arm'd, great God ariſe;
Help, Lord, or Iſr'el's *Champion dies:*
To thy Protection this thy Servant take,
And ſave, O ſave us, for thy Servant's ſake.
With Thunder arm'd, great God ariſe;
Help, Lord, or Iſr'el's *Champion dies.*

Samſon. Be of good Courage, I begin to feel
Some inward Motions, which do bid me go.
" Yet nothing will I do to ſtain my Vow,
" Or bring our Law Diſgrace. Perhaps this Day
" May be remark'd for ſome great Act, or elſe
" Be of my Days the laſt; Heav'n knows th' Event.
Micah. In time thou haſt reſolv'd, again he comes.
Harapha. Samſon, this ſecond Summons ſend our Lords:
Art thou our Captive, Slave, and publick Drudge,
Yet dare diſpute thy coming when we ſend?
Haſte thee at once, or we ſhall Engines find
To move thee, tho' thou wert a ſolid Rock.
Samſon. Vain were their Art if try'd; I yield to go,

Harapha. You thus may win the Lords to ſet you free.
Samſon. In nothing I'll comply that's ſcandalous,
Or ſinful by our Law.---Brethren, farewel;
Your kind Attendance now, I pray, forbear,
Leſt it offend to ſee me girt with Friends.
Expect of me you'll nothing hear impure,
Unworthy God, my Nation, or myſelf.
Micah. So may'ſt thou act as ſerves his Glory beſt.
Samſon. Let but that Spirit (which firſt ruſh'd on me
In the Camp of *Dan*) inſpire me at my Need,
Then ſhall I make *Jehovah*'s Glory known,
Their Idol Gods ſhall from his Preſence fly,
Scatter'd like Sheep before the God of Hoſts.

AIR *for* Samſon.

Thus when the Sun from's watry Bed,
All curtain'd with a cloudy Red,
Pillows his Chin upon an orient Wave;
The wand'ring Shadows ghaſtly pale
All troop to their infernal Jail,
Each fetter'd Ghoſt ſlips to his ſev'ral Grave.

Micah. With Might endu'd above the Sons of Men,
Swift as the Light'ning's Glance his Errand execute,
And ſpread his Name amongſt the Heathen round.

AIR *for* Micah.

The Holy One of Iſr'el *be thy Guide,*
The Angel of thy Birth ſtand by thy Side:
To Fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee ſtrike the Blow:
The Holy One of Iſr'el *is thy Guide.*

Chorus of *Iſraelites.*

To Fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee ſtrike the Blow:
The Holy One of Isr'el *is thy Guide.*

SCENE II.

MICAH, MANOA, *and Chorus of* Iſraelites.

Micah. Old *Manoa,* with youthful Steps, makes haſte
To find his Son, or bring us ſome glad News.
Manoa. I come, my Brethren, not to ſeek my Son,
Who at the Feaſt does play before the Lords;
But give you Part with me, what Hopes I have
To work his Liberty.
Micah. " Say, Reverend Sire,
" 'Twill much rejoice us to partake that Hope.
Manoa. " I have attempted, one by one, the Lords;
" Some I found harſh, ſet on Revenge in Spite;
" Others more moderate, their Aim Reward;
" The moſt confeſs'd they were enough reveng'd,
" If ſome convenient Ranſom was propos'd.

AIR *and Chorus of* Philiſtines *at a Diſtance.*

Great Dagon *has ſubdu'd our Foe,*
And brought their boaſted Hero low:
Sound out his Pow'r in Notes divine,
Praiſe him with Mirth, high Chear, and Wine.

Manoa. What Joy of Noiſe was that? it tore the Sky.
Micah. They ſhout and ſing to ſee their dreaded Foe
Now captive, blind, delighting with his Strength.
Manoa. Cou'd my Inheritance but ranſom him,
Without my Patrimony, having him,
The richeſt of my Tribe.

Micah. Sons care to nurſe
Their Parents in Old Age; but you, your Son.
Manoa. " My daily Task ſhall be to guide his Steps,
" And think of thoſe high Deeds by him atchiev'd;
" Combing thoſe Locks which down his Shoulders wave,
" At once our Nation's Strength and Ornament.

AIR *for* Manoa.

How willing my Paternal Love
The Weight to ſhare
Of Filial Care,
And part of Sorrow's Burden prove:
Tho' wand'ring in the Shades of Night,
Whilſt I have Eyes he wants no Light.

Micah. Your Hopes of his Deliv'ry ſeem not vain,
In which all *Iſr'el*'s Friends participate.
Manoa. I know your friendly Minds, and----

[*A Symphony here of Horror and Confuſion.*]

Heav'n! what Noiſe?
Horribly loud, unlike the former Shout.

Chorus of *Philiſtines* at a Diſtance.

Hear us, our God! O hear our Cry!
Death! Ruin! fall'n! no Help is nigh:
O Mercy, Heav'n! we ſink! we die!

Micah. Noiſe call you this? an univerſal Groan,
As if the World's Inhabitation periſh'd!
Blood, Death, and Ruin at their utmoſt Point!
Manoa. Ruin indeed! Oh! they have ſlain my Son!
Micah. Thy Son is rather ſlaying them; that Cry
From Slaughter of one Foe cou'd not aſcend.
Manoa. " What ſhall we do? ſtay here, or run and ſee?

Micah. " Keep here, leſt into Danger's Mouth we run.
" This general Cry ſpeaks all *Philiſtia* fall'n.
" What if his Eye ſight now by Heav'n reſtor'd,
" Enables him to Vengeance on his Foes?
Manoa. " That were a Joy preſumptuous to be thought.
Micah. " Things as incredible our God has wrought
" Of old; what hinders now?"----But ſee, my Friends,
One hither ſpeeds, an *Hebrew* of our Tribe.

SCENE III.

MANOA, MICAH, *and an* Iſraelite *Officer*, *Chorus of* Iſraelites.

Officer. Where ſhall I run, or which way fly the Thoughts
Of this moſt horrid Sight? O Countrymen!
You're in this ſad Event too much concern'd.
Micah. The Accident was loud, we long to know from whence.
Officer. Let me recover Breath; it will burſt forth.
Manoa. Tell us the Sum, the Circumſtance defer.
Officer. *Gaza* yet ſtands, but all her Sons are fall'n.
Manoa. Sad! not to us: But now relate by whom.
Officer. By *Samſon* done.
Manoa. The Sorrow leſſens ſtill,
And nigh converts to Joy.
Officer. Oh *Manoa!*
In vain I would refrain;----- the evil Tale
Too ſoon will rudely pierce thy aged Ear.
Manoa. Suſpenſe in News is Torture; ſpeak them out.
Officer. Then take the worſt in brief----*Samſon* is dead.
Manoa. The worſt indeed! My Hopes to free him hence
Are blaſted all; but Death, who ſets all free,
Hath paid his Ranſom now. " What windy Joys
" Had I this Day conceiv'd? abortive all!

" Like the fair firſt-born Bloom of early Spring,
" Nipt with the lagging Rear of Winter's Froſt.

Micah. Yet, ere we give the Reins to Grief, ſay firſt
How dy'd he? Death to Life is Crown or Shame.

Officer. Unwounded of his Enemies he fell,
At once he did deſtroy, and was deſtroy'd.
The Edifice, where all were met to ſee,
Upon their Heads, and on his own he pull'd.

Manoa. O laſtly over-ſtrong againſt thyſelf!
A dreadful Way thou took'ſt to thy Revenge:
Glorious, yet dearly bought!

Micah. " In Life and Death
" Thou haſt fulfill'd the Work for which foretold:
" And now thou ly'ſt victorious, tho' ſelf-kill'd,
" Triumphant o'er a Heap of ſlaughter'd Foes,
" More than thy Life had ſlain. Let *Iſr'el* now
" The Voice of Lamentation raiſe, and ſing
" A Hymn of Sorrow to this honour'd Soul.

AIR *for* Micah.

Ye Sons of Iſr'el *now lament,*
Your Spear is broke, your Bow's unbent;
Your Glory's fled,
Amongſt the Dead
Great Samſon *lies,*
For ever, ever, clos'd his Eyes.

Chorus of Iſraelites.

Weep, Iſr'el, *weep a louder Strain,*
Samſon, *your Strength, your Hero's ſlain.*

Manoa. Proceed we hence to find his Body ſoak'd
In vile *Philiſtine* Blood, with the pure Stream
And cleanſing Herbs waſh off the clodded Gore;

Then ſolemnly attend him to my Tomb,
With ſilent Obſequies and fun'ral Train.

Micah. The Body comes; we'll meet it on the way
With Laurels ever green, and branching Palm;
Then lay it in its Monument, hung round
With all his Trophies, and great Acts enroll'd
In Verſe Heroick, or ſweet Lyrick Song.

Manoa. There ſhall all *Iſr'el*'s valiant Youth reſort,
And from his Memory inflame their Breaſts
To matchleſs Valour, whilſt they ſing his Praiſe.

AIR *for* Manoa.

Glorious Hero, may thy Grave
Peace and Honour ever have;
After all thy Pains and Woes,
Reſt eternal, ſweet Repoſe.

Iſraelite Woman. The Virgins too ſhall on their feaſtful Days
Viſit his Tomb with Flow'rs, and there bewail
His Loſs unfortunate in Nuptial Choice.

Chorus of Virgins.

Bring the Laurels, bring the Bays,
Strew his Herſe, and ſtrew the Ways.

AIR.

May ev'ry Hero fall like thee,
Thro' Sorrow to Felicity.

Chorus repeated.

Bring the Laurels, bring the Bays,
Strew his Herſe, and ſtrew the Ways.

Manoa. Come, come; no Time for Lamentation now;
No Cauſe for Grief; *Samſon* like *Samſon* fell;
Both Life and Death heroick. To his Foes
Ruin is left; to Him eternal Fame.

Micah. Why ſhould we weep or wail, diſpraiſe or blame,
Where all is well and fair to quiet us?
Praiſe we *Jehovah* then, who to the End
Not parted from him, but aſſiſted ſtill,
'Till Deſolation fill'd *Philiſtia*'s Lands,
Honour and Freedom giv'n to *Jacob*'s Seed.

GRAND CHORUS.

Let the bright Seraphims in burning Row,
Their loud, up-lifted Angel-Trumpets blow:
Let the Cherubick Hoſt, in tuneful Choirs,
Touch their immortal Harps with golden Wires:
Let their cœleſtial Concerts all unite,
Ever to ſound his Praiſe in endleſs Blaze of Light.

FINIS.